

NEW JERSEY'S PLAN FOR ROUND 2 OF RACE TO THE TOP

KEY REFORMS FOR CONTINUAL SYSTEM LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT

Academic Standards

To ensure that New Jersey's high school graduates are college and career ready, New Jersey is making its academic standards - i.e., the skills and content knowledge it expects students to master - higher, clearer, more developmentally age-appropriate and well-sequenced, and more streamlined.

Assessments

New Jersey is improving its academic assessment tools and better aligning them with its standards. This will enable us to better measure which academic standards a student has mastered, and how much a student has grown in skills and content knowledge from quarter to quarter.

Longitudinal Data Systems

The State is developing a longitudinal data system that will enable the State to track each student's quarterly learning progress and some of its life consequences, and correlate this data with key factors relating to the educational experience of children.

The Evaluation of Educational Impacts

The State will use its improved ability to measure and track the learning of students to more precisely evaluate the educational impact of diverse factors in the educational experience of students: e.g., the educational impact of curricula, educational programs, teacher effectiveness and methodologies for developing it, school design, school effectiveness, and labor policies.

Stakeholder Involvement

The State will involve key stakeholders in construction and refinement of its standards, assessments, school effectiveness, and teacher and school leader evaluation metrics to ensure each best accomplishes its goal.

Transparency & Data-Driven Decision-Making

Data regarding the educational impacts of policies and practices will be made readily accessible to the public. With public support, the State will use its improved ability to evaluate educational impacts to continually improve the design of its public education system and policies.

Incentive Systems & Accountability

The State will sometimes use mandates to facilitate sub-system design or outcome improvements, but it will more often use incentives. Where policies and practices appear ineffective or counterproductive, alternative approaches will be pursued to see if they improve educational outcomes. Successful innovations will be extended throughout the system. Ineffective or counterproductive policies and practices will be ended.

A System Marked by Continual Learning and Improvement

New Jersey's public education system will become marked by continual learning and improvement. The power of ideology, money, special interests and political organizations will yield to the power of good public information.

SOME IMPORTANT REFORMS FOR IMPROVED SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

Content Standards

Adopt Common Core standards for English and Mathematics; use New Jersey's high standards for other subject areas.

Comprehensive Assessments

Establish a system that includes end-of-year, periodic, and day-to-day formative assessments. Encourage local flexibility for the day-to-day in-classroom assessments focused on supporting instruction.

Data System

Bring our data system into the 21st century, creating efficiencies and providing powerful tools and resources. Create meaningful efficiencies for our school districts, while developing virtuous learning cycles about what works and why, at all levels.

Recruitment

Research suggests that teaching quality can be strengthened is by opening pathways to the teaching professional while supporting and monitoring their performance once they start teaching. Expand recruitment and alternate pathway programs to recruit the best teachers to the state.

✓ **Teacher Performance Index**

Establish the principle that student learning must represent at least 50% of teacher and school leader evaluations. Convene an evaluation committee of key stakeholders to develop state evaluation frameworks for teachers and leaders, each of which will include local criteria.

✓ **Professional Support**

Provide professional development, teaching clinics, and on-site coaching along with rich instructional resources to teachers and leaders.

✓ **Equity Incentives**

Our neediest schools deserve access to our best teachers. Provide bonuses to highly effective teachers willing to teach in schools and classrooms with a high proportion of students at risk. Provide pension and tenure "retreat rights" to teachers who answer the call. Support mutual consent in hiring practices.

✓ **Reward Learning Outcomes**

Create a state bonus pool to reward teachers for student learning outcomes. Distribute 50% directly to teachers or teacher teams, with the remaining 50% apportioned among school staff and programs. Base the amount of bonus awards on both student achievement and student growth, with a special emphasis on growth by our most disadvantaged children.

✓ **Teacher Certification**

Establish a career ladder with "Master Teacher" and "Master Principal" certifications to recognize and empower our state's highly effective teachers and school leaders who have demonstrated mastery of academic content and delivery of high quality instruction.

✓ **Using Evaluation Results**

Should Reductions in Force be required, base decisions on evaluation data, not seniority.

✓ **Tenure**

Extend the tenure timeline to five years, and require three years of "effective" or better evaluations for a teacher to be granted tenure.

✓ **School Performance Index**

Establish and publish an index for school performance.

Transform Struggling Schools

Support district efforts to turn around or transform our most struggling schools. Close intractable failing schools to be re-opened by alternate providers.

Small-School Innovation

✓ Give districts the option to pilot alternatives to traditional and charter schools through the creation of board-approved, teacher-led Achievement Academies.

Charter Authorizers

✓ Ask the legislature to create new Charter School Authorizers with the authority to authorize new charter schools, monitor charter contracts, and make non-renewal or closure decisions.

Consolidate Services

Rely on our County Executive Offices to take a greater role consolidating shared-service contracts, improving efficiency and reducing costs.